



Quit smoking for a new lease on life

Grant County's Health Department and the American Cancer Society want people to kick the habit

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – Each fall, the Grant County Health Department promotes the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout, but health officials add you don't have to pick a certain month to take this step toward better health.

They say any time is a good time for smokers to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking.

According to the Cancer Society, by quitting even for one day, smokers take an important step towards a healthier life and reducing their cancer risk.

Here are some important facts: Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death

in the US, yet about 42 million Americans still smoke cigarettes, approximately one in every five adults.

As of 2012, there were also 13.4 million cigar smokers in the US, and 2.3 million who smoke tobacco in pipes.

More than a quarter of a million youth who had never smoked a cigarette used electronic cigarettes in 2013, according to a CDC study published in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. These, most likely, will be tomorrow's tobacco users.

Here are some health facts that may support a decision to quit. Experts say for those who quit, within:

- **20 Minutes:** Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

- **12 Hours:** The carbon monoxide level in our blood drops to normal.

- **2 weeks-3 months:** Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

- **1-9 months:** Coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

- **1 year:** The excess risk of coronary

heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker's.

- **5 years:** Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years.

- **10 years:** The risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking.

- **15 years:** The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

That's why health experts agree, quitting tobacco is the best thing you can do for your health.

The Grant County Health Department say people can get help and information by calling the Quit Line 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit the Quitline online at www.quitnow.net/oregon.

Information for this column is from Sheila Comer, Tobacco Prevention and Education Program coordinator at the Grant County Health Department, and the American Cancer Society.